



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ACCESSIONS TO THE COLLECTION
OF ANCIENT GLASS

THE many varieties of decorating glass vessels employed by the ancients have been fully described in the Supplement to the June BULLETIN, 1911, and can be studied in our Collection of Ancient Glass exhibited in Gallery 39. The only technique which is not adequately illustrated in this collection is that of painted and gilded glass; and for this reason the acquisition of an excellent example of the latter is particularly welcome (fig. 2).

The piece is a fragmentary cup belonging to the class popularly known by the Italian name *vetri a fondi d'oro* (glasses with gold bottoms).¹ These consist of medallions or flat-bottomed cups, the majority of which come from the Roman catacombs, though examples have also been discovered elsewhere in Italy and in the Rhine country. In the catacombs they are found inserted in the plaster of the walls, where they were placed in commemoration of the dead. In the case of the cups the protruding rims are often broken off, but the bottoms, which bear the decoration, are generally well preserved. The process of the decoration appears to have been as follows: While the glass was still hot it was covered with gold-leaf. The design was then engraved on it with a sharp instrument and the superfluous gold-leaf removed from the background. The vessel was thereupon either dipped in liquid transparent glass, or, if the design was not applied directly on the vessel but on a separate piece of glass, this was fused to the vessel. In either case the gold design appears embedded between two layers of glass and is thus perfectly protected.

This process was described some centuries after the production of these glasses by Heraclius in a treatise (*De filialis auro decoratis*), in which he tells of his own attempts to make such cups. In modern times similar experiments were made to revive the technique. At first, great difficulty was experienced in keeping the gold-

leaf intact when the vessel was dipped in the liquid glass; but at last Salviati in Venice succeeded in correctly reproducing the lost art. Inferior reproductions can be distinguished by the fact that the covering layer of glass is not fused with the vessel all over its surface, but is attached only along the edges. The technique must have originated in Egypt, since the earliest specimens are found in Alexandria. The examples from the catacombs mostly belong to the third to fifth centuries A. D.

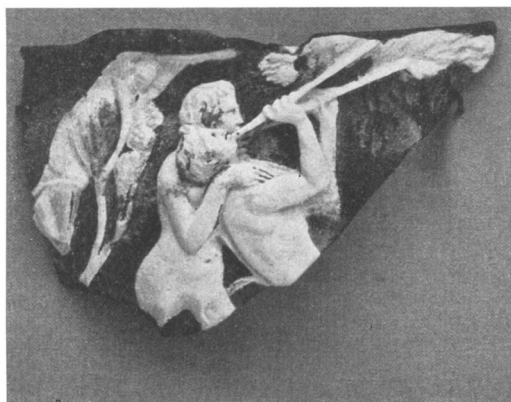
From the point of view of artistic merit the earliest are generally superior to the later specimens. The subjects represented cover a wide range and include scenes taken from classical mythology, daily life, and Christian legends. Classical subjects are particularly frequent on the earlier examples, that is, during the third century A. D., and occur even on glasses found in the catacombs. For it is characteristic of the simplicity of these early Christians that Venus, Cupid, Minerva, and Hercules did not seem incongruous figures on objects employed in the cult of their dead. From the fourth century Christian scenes predominate, the subjects being taken both from the Old and the New Testament. Inscriptions often occur and sometimes even form the sole decoration.

On our example are depicted Saint Peter and Saint Paul, seated facing each other, each lifting a hand as if speaking. A little figure of Christ is placed between them, holding a wreath over the head of each apostle. The names PETRVS and PAV(L)VS are added above. The border around the picture is taken up by another inscription: ELARES EN CRISTO DENGETAS AMICORVM, which is badly spelled Latin for HILARIS IN CRISTO DIGNITAS AMICORVM and may be translated, Joyful in Christ, pride of thy friends. The representation of Saint Peter and Saint Paul is a favorite subject on these glasses. (For illustrations of a number of examples, see Garrucci, *Storia della Arte cristiana*, pls. 178-184.) About the middle of the fourth century A. D., they are depicted as young, beardless figures, in a sitting attitude, and it is thus that we find them on our example; later they are represented standing, often

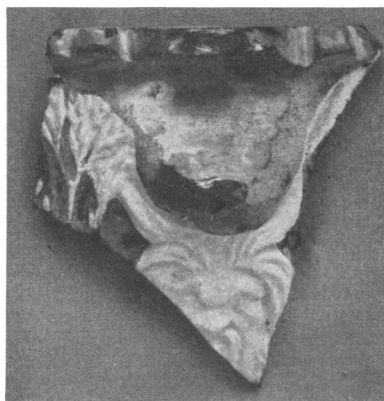
¹ For the most recent scientific treatise on this subject, see Vopel, *Die altchristlichen Goldgläser*, 1898.

in conjunction with other saints; and finally they appear in bust form. In these later specimens the apostles are no longer conceived of as young men, but as old, bearded figures. One of these late representations, with Saint Peter and Saint Paul in bust form

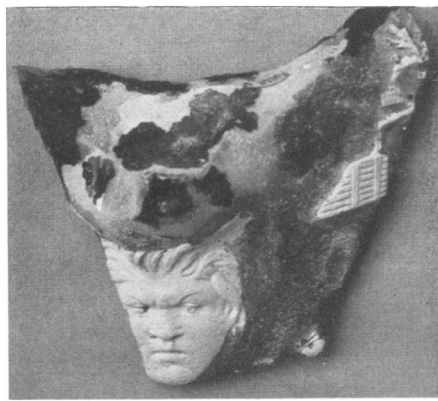
with an interesting representation of a river-god in recumbent attitude, pouring water from an amphora. The background is filled with small horizontal blue strokes which are apparently meant to indicate water. Above can be seen parts of two



a



b



c

FIG. 1. FRAGMENTS OF A GLASS CUP. FIRST CENTURY, A. D.

facing each other, will be found in the Glass Room (Gallery 39) in Case B. It belongs to the Gréau Collection of glass, lent by J. Pierpont Morgan. Unfortunately the preservation is not good, the glass being broken in several pieces and the gold-leaf having become discolored.

In this connection must be mentioned another piece of gilt glass belonging to the Gréau Collection (Gallery 39, Case B). It is a fragment from the bottom of a bowl

horses in full gallop. Not enough remains to make out the subject represented.

The glass collection has further been enriched by three beautiful fragments from a dark blue cup decorated with reliefs in opaque white (fig. 1). The technique of this form of decoration has already been described in the Supplement to the June BULLETIN, 1911, p. 22. It was practised during the first century A. D. Two of the newly acquired pieces (b, c) are from opposite

sides of the cup, each showing remains of a handle below which are the heads of Seilenos and a young satyr respectively; in the background are trees and a pair of pipes. The third (a) shows a satyr blowing the double flutes, leaning back and supported by a companion. The workmanship of this piece is exquisite; the modeling of the two bodies is beautifully rendered, every detail being indicated with great care. When we

remember the great difficulty of working with so brittle a material as glass, our appreciation of the artist's skill will be proportionate. From the curvature of the fragments and the remains of the handles the shape of the cup can be made out. It is of the form often found in late Greek and Roman glazed pottery and consists of a deep bowl with low foot and a pair of round perpendicular handles.

G. M. A. R.



FIG. 2. FRAGMENT OF A GILDED GLASS CUP
FOURTH CENTURY A. D.